

Cross Examining Cultures through Sibling Rivalry Myths

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Abstract

The introduction of the paper talks about sibling rivalry myths in general and how they are used to explain the world. The paper then gives five different sibling rivalry myths with an analysis done by outside parties. These myths are Cain and Abel, Osiris and Seth, Atreus and Thyestes, Romulus and Remus, and the Iroquois creation myth. The conclusion then contains a short paragraph of my own analysis of the story in regards to how the sibling rivalry was used in the story.

Acknowledgments

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Process Analysis Statement

For this paper the first thing that I did was go through different cultures myths looking for sibling rivalry myths. The only qualifications that I had for choosing a myth was that I had not already used a myth from that culture and that the main characters were siblings. The ones that I found were the stories of Cain and Abel in Hebrew mythology, Osiris and Seth in Egyptian mythology, Atreus and Thyestes in Greek mythology, Romulus and Remus in Roman mythology, and the Iroquois creation story. I then related them in that order in my paper because that is the order in which these stories appeared. I then used tried my best to obtain original sources for these stories as I could, but could not find any for Osiris and Seth or the Iroquois creation story. After this I used jstor.org to find articles of people analyzing the stories in order to have an analysis done by other people to talk about the story in general. I then analyzed these stories on my own and used that in order to write the intro and conclusion to my paper, while the body consisted of the stories and the analyses done by others.

Abbreviations

A.E. – Apollodorus *Epitome*

Ae.E. – Aeschylus *Eumenides*

A.L. – Aeschylus *Libation-bearers*

E.E. – Euripides *Electra*

E.I. – Euripides *Iphigenia in Aulis*

Gen – Genesis

P.R. – Plutarch *Romulus*

Introduction

Every person who has siblings has disagreed with their sibling on something at some point and had an argument about it. These arguments can be anything from a five minute discussion where one of the siblings proves their point to the other to a lifetime of never coming to an agreement and coming to hate one another because of it. This was no less true in the days of ancient history. Since siblings fighting with each other is such an ordinary thing of course it became an important aspect to told stories around. While these stories feature a sibling rivalry the rivalry in and of itself was not always the purpose of the story.

The purposes of sibling rivalry myths are many and varied. In general each of the siblings stand for a force with these forces being things that are in opposition to each other. These forces can be things like social classes or aspects of nature. The siblings are then used to explain how the forces interacted with each other. These explanations can then be used to show why things are the way they are. Sometimes however sibling rivalry myths can be used to explain things without the siblings standing in for opposing forces. The myths can be used to show people life lessons in interacting with other people. The myths could also simply have historical context and just happen to feature sibling rivalry.

In order to further explain these two general types of sibling rivalry myths I have taken myths from five different cultures that feature sibling rivalry. The siblings in these myths and the cultures they come from are Cain and Abel/Hebrew, Osiris and Seth/Egyptian, Atreus and Thyestes/Greek, Romulus and Remus/Roman, and the Iroquois creation myth which normally has the brothers names translated as Good Mind

and Bad Mind. Three of these myths have the siblings standing in for other forces while the other two are more historical with life lessons worked in. Each of these myths is also included with an analysis of the myth in general by another commentator. These myths have all been used to teach life lessons or explain why the world is the way it is, but they all have one theme that stretches across them.

Cain and Abel

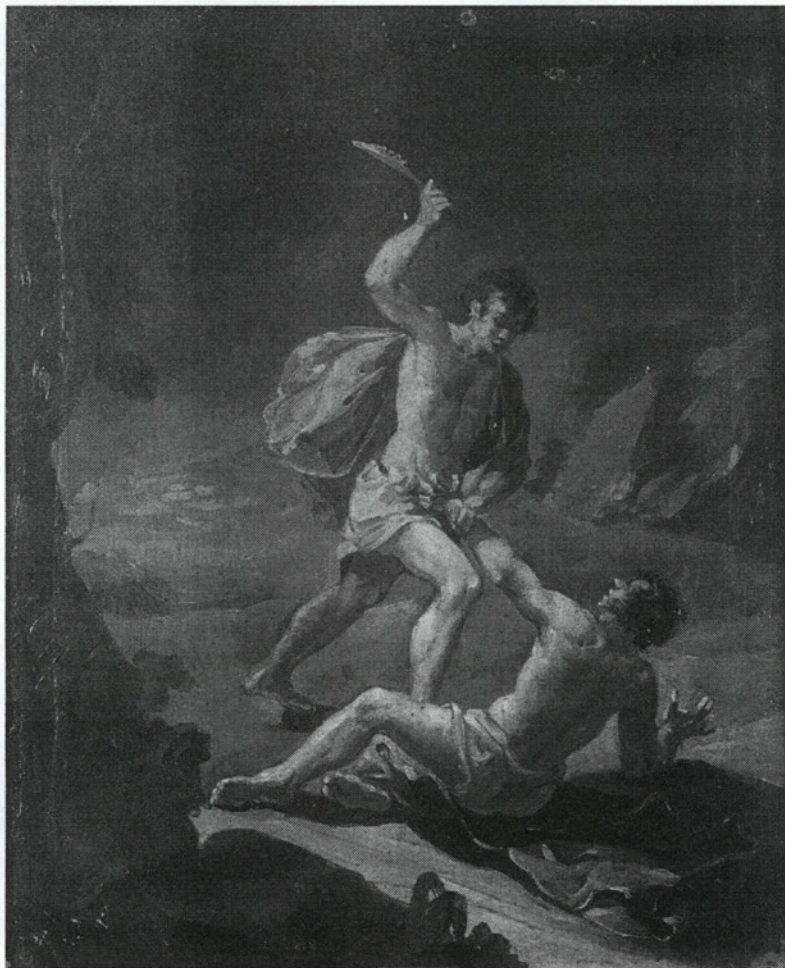


Figure 1: Cain killing Abel

Story

The story of Cain and Abel can be found in chapter four of the book of Genesis in the Old Testament. Cain and Abel are the children of Adam and Eve with Cain being the older brother. This story is the story of the first murder in Hebrew mythology. The story starts by telling us that Cain was a gardener and that Abel was a herdsman. Both Brothers would bring offerings to the Lord that were part of their possessions with Cain bringing fruit and Abel bringing choice cuts belonging to the firstborns from among the sheep. (Gen 4:1-4)

We are told that the Lord liked Abel's offerings, but did not like Cain's offerings. Cain of course was not happy with this situation. Here the Lord warns Cain from doing anything bad because of the mood that he is in. Cain then takes his brother Abel out into the field and kills him. When the Lord confronts Cain about this Cain tries to ignore the Lord, however the Lord knows what Cain has done and punishes him anyway. The punishment that Cain is given is to wander the land and not be able to grow crops no matter where he goes. Cain assumes that he will be killed by someone quickly, however the Lord puts a mark on him in order to keep other people from killing him. (Gen 4:4-15)

Analysis

Dan W Forsyth looks at the Cain and Abel story alongside other stories of sibling rivalry in Genesis in his article called "Sibling Rivalry, Aesthetic Sensibility, and Social Structure in Genesis." The parts of the story of Cain and Abel that are important to the author's argument are the fact that the Lord takes the role of the parents, the brothers

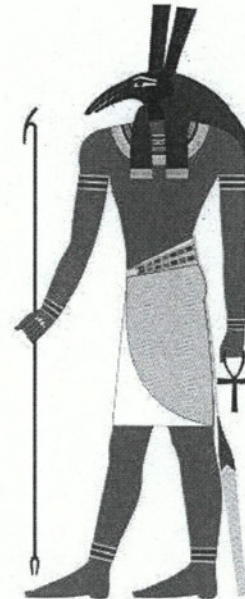
are full grown adults, Cain taking his anger at the Lord out on Abel, and Cain's punishment for killing his younger brother. He then talks about Cain's punishment, which is Cain being forced to leave his family and wander the land for the rest of his days. Cain not being killed for killing his brother is something that many people find confusing, however one reason that Cain may have been spared is because his descendants were needed in order to accomplish certain goals. Cain is spared according to the author's overall argument is because it was the first of its kind and so Cain is the symbol of directing ones anger towards another person in a direct fashion (Forsyth 478-479).

The other parts of the story that are important are important because of the way that they line up with other sibling rivalry stories in Genesis. In many of the other ones the brothers are all grown up and the Lord is used in place of the actual parents. The more important aspect however is that the younger brother is preferred by the parents in the story. This is seen in the story of Joseph and the coat of many colors. Joseph the youngest sibling is given an expensive coat by his father while the rest of the sons get nothing. In this story the older brothers are aggressive towards Joseph like Cain was to Abel. They however did not kill Joseph (Forsyth).

Osiris and Seth



OSIRIS ENTHRONED



SETH

Figure 2: Osiris looking at Seth from his throne

Story

The four children of Geb the earth god and Nut the sky goddess are Osiris, Isis, Seth, and Nephthys. Since Osiris was the oldest he became the ruler of Egypt with his sister Isis as his queen. All was good until one day Osiris was attacked by his brother Seth alongside the river Nedyet. With Osiris now dead Seth becomes ruler of Egypt with Nephthys as his queen however Nephthys feels for Isis and helps her look for Osiris' body. They eventually find his body at Abydos. Isis manages to revive Osiris with her power and then has a son, Horus, with him. After this Osiris becomes the ruler of the land of the dead (Hart, *Egyptian Myths* 29-33).

Horus grows up with his mother in hiding so that they can stay safe from Seth. When Horus comes of age he comes before the court of gods led by Re the sun god in order to make his claim on the throne of Egypt. Several of the gods accept his claim immediately however Re does not think it should just be given to him. Seth suggests that he and Horus should have a fight to determine who will be the ruler of Egypt. For eighty years they argue over about Horus becoming the ruler of Egypt. They send a letter to the creator goddess Neith to ask her opinion. Neith says to make Horus the ruler, but to give Seth the daughters of Re, Anat and Astarte, as wives as compensation. Re still does not think that Horus should be in charge and ends up storming out at this point. Hathor, daughter of Re and goddess of love, convinces Re to return to the court (Hart 33-35).

At this point Re ask both Seth and Horus to explain why they should be in charge. Seth says that he should get the throne since he is so strong. This argument is countered by the fact that a son should get his father's inheritance. Seth then says that he should get the throne since he is older than Horus. Isis tries to gain sympathy for her son at this point, but Seth threatens the others in the court to have trial moved to a different location in order to stop Isis from interfering. Isis however is able to sneak into the new meeting place. Isis then uses a disguise as a beautiful young women in order to trick Seth. She tells him of how her son is in danger of losing his father's inheritance to a stranger and ask for Seth to help defend him. Seth agrees to do it. Isis then uses her magic to flee, but not before informing him that he just agreed that Horus should have the throne. Seth complains to Re about being tricked, but Re just calls him an idiot (Hart 35).

Before Horus is given the throne of Egypt however Seth manages to challenge Horus to a contest for the throne. The contest is to change into a hippopotamus and remain submerged for three months. Isis believing that Seth is going to attack Horus while they are underwater throws harpoons in trying to hit Seth. She hits Horus first, but heals him right after. She then hits Seth, but he convinces her to heal him since he is her brother still. When Horus comes out of the water he is mad at Isis for healing Seth and cuts her head off and then carries it off into the desert. A search is then sent out for him. Isis' head is found and restores, but meanwhile Seth finds Horus and rids Horus of his eyes. Hathor finds Horus and manages to heal Horus who then tells Re what happened. Re then orders both Seth and Horus to stop fighting since it has gotten too far out of hand (Hart 36).

Seth then tries to humiliate Horus by covering Horus with Seth's semen. However Horus is able to catch the semen with his hand. After disposing of this semen Isis gets some of Horus' semen and spreads it in Seth's garden. When Seth goes before the gods to explain how he has dominated Horus in a sexual manner Horus calls him a liar. The gods use magic to call forth both of Seth's semen which comes from elsewhere. Then they call forth Horus's semen which comes from Seth since he ate the food that had semen on it in his garden. Seth gets angry from this and challenges Horus to another challenge (Hart 36-37).

This time the challenge is to race boats made of stone. Horus makes a boat out of wood and covers it in plaster in order to make it look like it was made of stone, while Seth uses a boat made out of stone. Seth's boat sinks of course, but then Seth turns into hippopotamus and sinks Horus' boat. At this point Horus goes to Neith to complain

about how he still has not been given his inheritance yet even though he has proved many times how he is better than Seth (Hart 37).

At the same time Re is in communication with Osiris who of course support Horus by pointing out how he, Osiris, has helped out the world. Re says that Osiris has not really done that much. At this Osiris threatens to let the monsters in the underworld lose upon the world. This threat convinces the court of the gods to vote unanimously for Horus to be the ruler of Egypt. Seth is forced to surrender his claim to Egypt, but is taken by Re up to the heavens in order to be the voice of thunder (Hart 37).

Analysis

In el-Sayed el-Aswad's article "Archaic Egyptian Cosmology" he says that the story of Osiris and Seth is a cosmology of social ethics as opposed to the earlier cosmology of natural processes in Egyptian myth. This cosmology of social ethics has then been divided up into pairs of opposites with Osiris standing for the good side of the pairings and Seth standing for the bad side. This is easily understood with the knowledge that Osiris is connected to the fertility of the Nile and Seth is connected to the desert. The theme of unity can also be seen in the story by how the gods slowly side against Seth and with Horus. This even includes Seth's wife Nephthys (El-Sayed 72).

At the beginning of the story Osiris is portrayed as a strong ruler that was one with his people, while Seth is a powerful solitary figure. Isis starts as a supportive figure, but quickly takes a central part of the story when Osiris dies. Osiris' death and resurrection were connected with burial ritual at the time. When a pharaoh died they

dismembered and mummified him in order to make him closer to Osiris. Then the new pharaoh would be associated with Horus (El-Sayed 72-73).

Pharaohs also would claim to be the son of the sun god Ra. Over time this practice made it so that the king of the underworld, Osiris, and the sun god, Ra, became associated with each other, since the pharaoh would have been a son of both of them. Osiris' death made him a spirit as well as a god which is what gave him control over the underworld. This ended up with the part that was Ra ruling the visible part of the universe while the part that was Osiris ruled the invisible part of the universe (El-Sayed 73-75).

Atreus and Thyestes

Family Tree (Simplified)

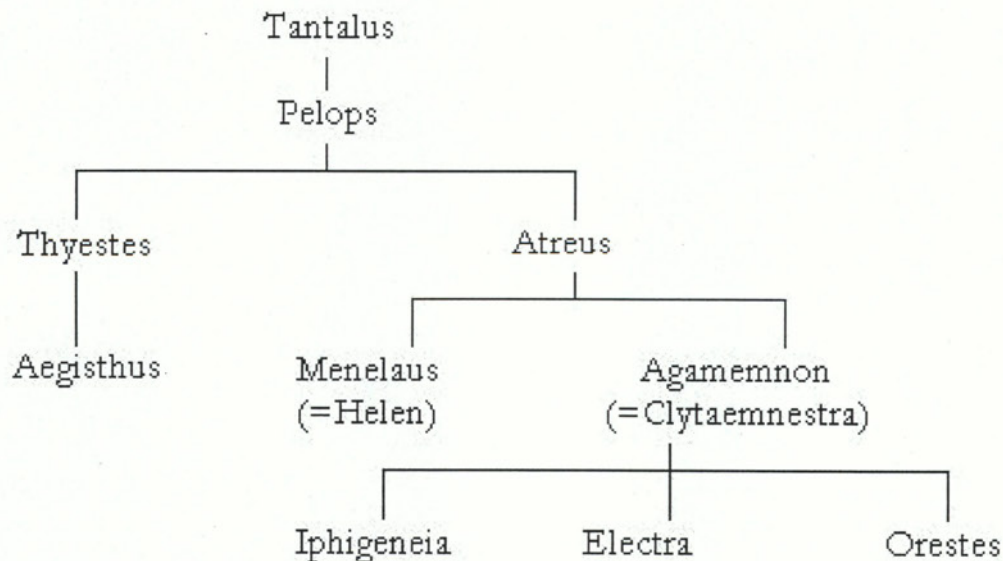


Figure 3: Family tree of Atreus and Thyestes

Story

It was being debated whether Atreus or Thyestes should become the king of Mycenae. Now Atreus had been given a lamb with a fleece of gold from the gods in order to test him in the past. The reason this was a test was because he had promised Artemis to sacrifice the finest of his flock to her. He had passed the test by sacrificing the lamb, but he kept the fleece for himself. Atreus said that he should become king of Mycenae because he owned this fleece. Thyestes agreed that whoever owned the fleece should be king, however Thyestes had already stolen the fleece with help from Atreus' wife, Aerope, this made it so that he was going to become king of Mycenae. Zeus decided to help Atreus out though. He had Atreus get Thyestes to agree to abdicate the throne if the sun went in the opposite direction in the sky. Zeus had Helios change directions in the middle of the day thus allowing Atreus to become king of Mycenae (A.E. 2:10-12).

For a period of time Thyestes was in exile for trying to take the throne through trickery, however this time was used by Atreus in order to plan a revenge against Thyestes for sleeping with Aerope. When Thyestes was coming back from his exile Atreus cut up and cooked all of Thyestes' children and then had them served as the main course to welcome Thyestes home. Atreus then revealed what he had done and had Thyestes exiled again. Thyestes decided to ask the oracle of Delphi how he could get his revenge on Atreus. He was told to have a son with his daughter, Pelopia, (A.E. 2:13-14) which he did, without her knowing that it was him, however he left his sword behind by accident.

King Atreus had gone looking for Thyestes in order to throw him into prison. While looking for Thyestes Atreus ran into Pelopia and married her. She had a son Aegisthus soon after, but Aegisthus was actually Thyestes son. Pelopia tried to have the child killed, but Atreus stopped this from happening since he assumed the boy was his son. Eventually Thyestes was found and put into prison in Mycenae. Atreus sent Aegisthus to kill Thyestes, however Thyestes disarmed him and then noticed that the sword was the one he had left behind when he had raped his daughter. He had Aegisthus bring Pelopia to him. She killed herself upon discovering that it was her father that had raped her in the past. Thyestes then had Aegisthus kill Atreus (A.E. 2:14). Thyestes only ruled for a short while before being forced to give the throne of Mycenae to Atreus' son Agamemnon.

Before leaving for the Trojan War with his brother, Menelaus, Atreus is forced to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia in order to appease Artemis (E.I. 1560-1570). Agamemnon's wife, Clytemnestra, was mad at her husband for doing this and decided to have an affair while he was gone. She had the affair with Aegisthus, who ended up gaining considerable power in Mycenae because of this relationship. Shortly after Agamemnon got back he started taking a bath, which is where Clytemnestra hacked him to pieces (E.E. 157-166). Agamemnon's daughter, Electra, sent her brother, Orestes, away to Phocis. This was done in order to make sure that Aegisthus did not have him killed.

Time passes and now Orestes is grown up and has been charged by Apollo with avenging his father's death. On his way to kill his mother and Aegisthus he stops at his father's grave and runs into Electra. He tells her to keep quiet about having met up with

him. Orestes then pretends to be a passing traveler asking for hospitality.

Clytemnestra herself comes out, but does not recognize her son. Orestes gives a fake report about himself being dead. This makes it so that Aegisthus drops his guard and made it easy for Orestes to kill him. When Clytemnestra sees Orestes kill Aegisthus she tries to appeal to her son's familial duty, but he was not persuaded (A.L.).

The Erinyes, who are in charge of punishing people who sin against their own family, began to torment Orestes (A.L. 1034-1064). So he went to Delphi in order to ask Apollo for help since the Erinyes were attacking him because of what Apollo had told him to do. Apollo sent Orestes to Athens where he was tried for killing his mother. There Apollo argued that Clytemnestra had not really been a mother to Orestes. Athena found the argument convincing and got him acquitted (Ae.E. 179-755). This was enough to please the Erinyes and with them gone Orestes took the throne of Mycenae.

Analysis

According to Robert Graves in *The Greek Myths* the story of Atreus and Thyestes story may be a reflection on them fighting as co-kings over who has more power. He also says that the lamb with the fleece of gold may have been a reference to the fact that some people would have used a fleece in order to collect gold dust in rivers or the top of the royal scepter was a golden ram. Apparently one of the ways that Atreus gained more power was by proving that the earth went around the sun instead of the other way around as everyone believed. The part where Atreus feeds Thyestes

own children to him is probably connected to an annual sacrifice of children surrogates, which may have ties to Cronus vomiting his children (Graves 406-407).

Agamemnon being killed while he was exiting the bath draws a connection to a story of another king who was killed at midsummer. This story along with some others follows the pattern of the king being killed by a treacherous goddess during a time of transition and someone not his son succeeding the throne. These stories end with the son returning and claiming the throne (Graves 413).

The part of the story where Orestes killed his mother, Clytemnestra was a new idea to the Greeks. This is in part because thrones were passed down through daughters who had married foreign men. This made it so that the mother was not blamed for betraying her husband the king and was so spared when the son killed the usurper. The idea of Orestes killing his Clytemnestra himself was so much out of the norm that older version of the story have him sending her to court in order to be judged. In this scenario the Erinyes come after him because he did not support Clytemnestra in the trial. Changing the story to have Orestes kill Clytemnestra himself may have been a way of transitioning the society into one that valued patrilinear descent more than matrilinear descent (Graves 420-421).

The Erinyes of course are a symbol of one's conscience and are sometimes seen as the ghost of the person that has been wronged. In order to away from this ghost a person has to first sacrifice a pig in order to distract the ghost. While the ghost is distracted the person washes themselves and cuts their hair so that the ghost will not recognize them. That person must then spend one year in exile. During this time they would be shunned by the neighbors (Graves 427).

Romulus and Remus

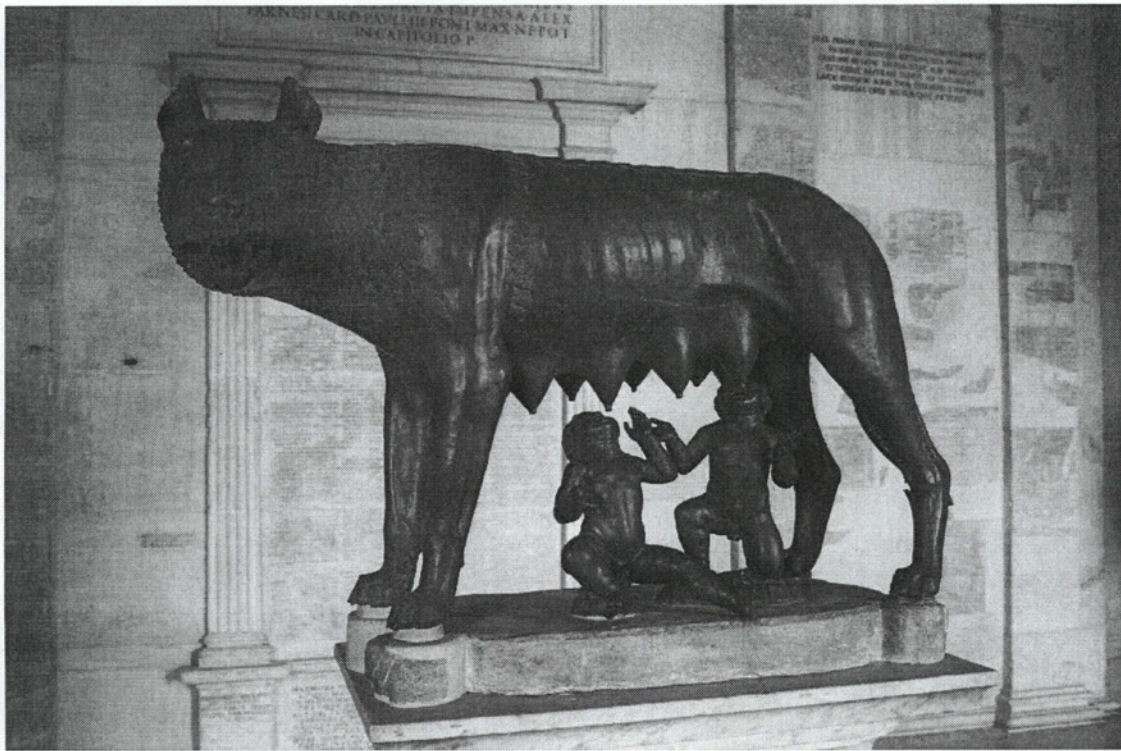


Figure 4: Romulus and Remus being suckled by she-wolf

Story

The people of Troy who survived the Trojan War ended up living in and ruling the land of Alba. Eventually it a time came where two brothers both had the right to the throne. The brothers, Numitor and Amulius, agreed that one should get the kingdom while the other got the money that they owned with Numitor having the kingdom. Amulius then used the money in order to take the kingdom away from his brother. He then made Numitor's daughter, Ilia, a Vestal virgin so that she could not have any children. Somehow she ended up having twin baby boys. Amulius had the boys placed in a trough and sent down the river in order to kill them, however they just floated down the river until they came to the land known as Germanus (P.R. 3).

They came to rest under a fig tree where a she-wolf and a woodpecker took care of them. These animals being sacred to Mars gives credence to them being the children of Mars, but they may also be Amulius' as well (P.R. 4). The boys were then raised by Faustulus, a swine-herd of Amulius. These boys came to be called Romulus and Remus and were known for being strong and noble men in the area. They also did a good job of protecting their sheep from thieves, who turned out to be rival shepherds. One time, while Romulus was performing a sacrifice, the thieves attacked Remus and brought him to their lord, Numitor. While thinking of how to punish Remus he noticed some characteristics of Remus that made him believe that he might be his grandson. He had Remus relate the story of his birth and after this was done Romulus showed up with the trough and confirmed the story. Within hours of this happening they retook the throne of Alba from Amulius (P.R 6-8)

Since Romulus and Remus did not want to king in Alba while Numitor was still alive they left to go build a kingdom elsewhere. The brothers however disagreed on which hill they should build their city. So they each sat on their hill to look for any signs. Remus saw six vultures while Romulus said that he saw twelve vultures. When Remus was told that Romulus may have lied about how many vultures he saw Remus jumped over Romulus' wall. Romulus attacked and killed Remus for doing this. After burying Remus Romulus got help from the men in Tuscany in order to finish building his city, which was named Rome (P.R 9-11).

When they were done building the city of Rome Romulus divided the men between the army and the general populace and pick which ones should be in the government. He made a government in which the members of the senate stood for and

protected the citizens of the state. At the beginning most of the people living in Rome were men. In order to fix this Romulus came up with a way to collect women for his city. He invited the Sabines over to partake in a festival. In the middle of the festival Romulus and his men all drew their swords and started taking women, but let the men go. They were careful to only take unmarried women so as to upset the Sabines as little as possible (P.R. 13-14).

At first the Sabines tried to get women back from the Romans by diplomacy, but Romulus refused to return the women and so both sides started preparing for war. One of the cities of Sabine attacked Rome earlier without support from the others and was easily routed. The Romans then took this city and brought all of its citizens back to Rome to be citizens of Rome. This process was then repeated against a group of Sabine cities, however Romulus then split up the new territory between his newly conquered people. When the rest of the Sabines marched on Rome, led by Tatius, the daughter of the guard, Tarpeia, made an agreement to let them in in exchange for golden armlets they wore on their left arms. However since she asked for what they had on their left arms they gave her both their golden armlets and their shields, which ended up crushing her to death. Romulus tried to take Rome back, but was not successful at first and was only able to regroup his army after praying to Jupiter for help. The women then ran in, some with children, crying out for men on both sides of the battle. This sight stopped the fighting at once. Upon realizing that some of the women had fallen in love with their Roman captors the Sabines agreed to a peace treaty that made Romulus and Tatius joint kings (P.R. 16-19).

After a few years of ruling as joint kings some of Tatius' retainers tried to rob the ambassadors from Laurentum and ended up killing them. Romulus tried to have the men punished at once, but Tatius disagreed. Friends of the now dead ambassadors attacked and killed Tatius for this and praised Romulus. Romulus decided to let Tatius' murderers go free since they were just avenging their comrades. However plagues came upon Rome shortly after this. Because of the plagues Romulus had both the murderers of the ambassadors and of Tatius punished, however while the plagues were having an effect on the city Rome was attacked. Romulus defeating the attacking army and took over the city that had sent the army (P.R 23-24).

Rome's growing power caused distress in the more powerful nations around Rome. Tuscan tried to claim that one of the cities that Rome had absorbed belonged to them instead. Romulus disagreed with this statement and went to war with them. The Tuscans managed to take control over the city they claimed belonged to them for a short while, but Romulus quickly defeated and almost took Tuscan. The Tuscans made a peace treaty with Romulus before this could happen. After this Romulus fell more into his role of being king of Rome and gained the territory of Alba when his grandfather Numitor died. (P.R. 25-27).

The nature of Romulus' death is not known. All that is known is that he disappeared suddenly and without a word. Some say that the senate murdered him and sliced him up in order to conceal the body among their robes. Others that while he was giving a speech in public that darkness descended and when they were able to see again he was gone. People assumed that he had been taken up to heaven to be a god (P.R. 27-29).

Analysis

Rex Stem wrote an article talking about how Livy wrote the story of Romulus in his histories in order to make everything that Romulus did was good at some level called "The Exemplary Lessons of Livy's Romulus". The paper starts with an opening statement from Livy's histories where Livy talks about how people must learn from what others have done in the past whether they were good or bad. With this idea in mind of course Romulus would be portrayed as someone who is a good example, however there are a few things that Romulus did in his life that would not be consider good. Livy seems to defend these bad actions done by Romulus by saying that they were for the good of the state which comes before the individual. This makes it so that actions are justified and makes Romulus look better (Stem 435-440).

The way that Livy writes about Romulus and Remus' birth is done in such a way that one can choose to believe how much of a divine influence was involved in it. This is Livy's way of letting his reader decide if Rome was fated to be or happen by pure happenstance, however the way Livy writes the story would suggest that it was fate. Romulus proves that he is a powerful warrior and a good leader when he is young when he and his brother retake their grandfather's kingdom. This event shows that Romulus will act decisively and attack injustice without question (Stem 441-443).

This then takes us to the founding of Rome, which includes Romulus' killing his brother. The conflict coming about because they could not agree on which hill to build Rome on even after both of their vulture sightings. Remus ends up dead, but the way that Livy writes the scene it does not have to be Romulus who strikes the blow that kills

Remus. Yet Livy also writes the common version known to everyone at the time of Remus jumping over the wall and Romulus killing him for it. This version brings up the question of whether Remus was at fault for making fun of Romulus or if Romulus overreacted to Remus playing around. This makes it so that there is one version where Remus' killer is unknown and one version with questionable justification for Remus' death. This way Livy does not have to say whether this was a good or bad thing. Livy then talks about Romulus building Rome and the rites that he did in order to consecrate it. He specifically talks about how the only foreign rites he used were the ones that the Greeks used for Hercules. This is done in a way so that the audience draws a connection between Romulus and Hercules and distracts them from what happened with Remus (Stem 444-449).

After this Romulus starts creating the government for Rome, which he does by using a senate. This is used to show how cooperation and power go hand in hand. Livy then uses the fact that Romulus used free asylum in order to bring people into his city as a way to set him apart from other city founders whose populations came from the ground. It also is needed in order to explain why Rome had a mostly male population at first. He starts by saying that Romulus tried to get women by diplomacy, but was turned down by everyone. This is done in order to make what Romulus did in order to get women justified. Romulus used a festival to get people into his city and then stole all the women and chased the men out in the middle of the festival. This is partly justified in that the city needs women in order to survive and because Romulus tried asking first. The families of the abductees are still justified in being made since they were invited into Rome under the name of a god and then had treachery done upon them. Livy goes about making the

Romans actions justified by first saying that the women were just abducted and not raped. For the purpose of this was to get wives and not for sex. Romulus then explains to the women why they have done this and says that he will make them citizens of Rome as married women. The men then all say that they are sorry for doing this. The women are ok after the explanation and apology (Stem 450-455).

However Romulus should still be guilty of violated the rules of hospitality. Before this can be explained away the Sabine men are angry at Rome and start attacking. However only one city is in the initial attack and so is easily overpowered since this city did nothing to prepare and attacked solely in anger. After this battle Romulus makes a sacrifice to Jupiter and consecrates a temple to Jupiter at the same time. The fact the Jupiter accepts the temple is a powerful sign that the Romans are not in trouble for violating the rules of hospitality. Romulus defeats the next wave of Sabine cities to attack and makes the men in those armies' citizens of Rome. Doing this shows that he is not mad at the men for trying to get revenge for what Rome did to their women. After this the rest of Sabine comes in force against Rome, which puts it on the retreat. Romulus is able to turn the battle around after praying to Jupiter though. Before the battle can be finished though the Sabine women interrupt the battle and get the men to agree to stop fighting. This leads to a joint monarchy of Romulus and Tatius. Since the Romans ended up with a more powerful kingdom at the end of the entire situation their actions at the beginning appear to be wholly vindicated (Stem 456-459).

The next situation in which Romulus' actions are questionable is when Tatius is murdered. Livy brings up two possible explanations as to why Romulus reacted the way that he did. These reasons are that Romulus did not like sharing power or that Tatius'

death was already justified. Since it was already known that Tatius got killed because he did not punish his retainers after they killed some ambassadors his death is already justified. This means that the other reason can be dismissed easily enough. Romulus' decision to not take revenge for Tatius' death is justified because it stops the circle of violence and because another city begins a war with Rome at the same time. This war further enforces Romulus' strength and use of strategy (Stem 459-461).

Livy presents a divine and a more ordinary death for Romulus just like his birth was. The divine has Romulus being taken away to heaven in a cloud of darkness while giving a speech to his soldiers. The more ordinary death has him being betrayed and killed by the senators. This is done in the same way that his birth was done in order to give the reader the choice of which story is the real one. He does include a story of a respectable man who talked with Romulus on the road shortly after Romulus' death. This man said that Romulus told him that he had become a god. This story seems to validate the divine death more just like the divine birth (Stem 461-466).

Iroquois Creation Myth

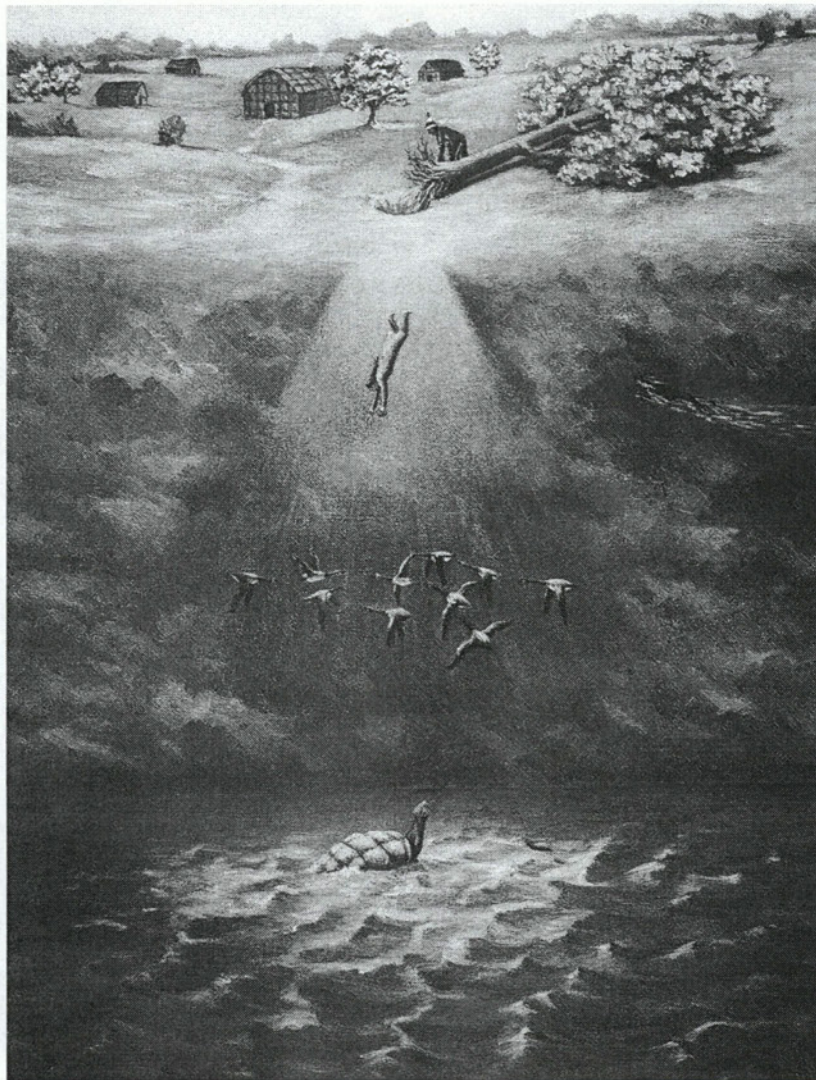


Figure 5: Atahensic falling from sky

Story

At the beginning of time there were two separate worlds. A lower world that was only water and never had any sunlight and an upper world in the clouds. The Great Ruler and his family lived up in the clouds. One day while the goddess Atahensic was with child she laid down on a soft mattress. The mattress sank right through the clouds causing her to fall towards the lower world. To the creatures in the lower world she

appeared as a bright light and they decided that they should give that light someone to land. So the Muskrat went to the bottom of the water to get the earth and put it on the Turtle's back (Jackson, *Myths and Legends* 321).

Shortly after Atahensic had been set down on the earth by a couple of birds she began to hear the voices of the two children in her womb. When the children were born she named the one that came out of her armpit Bad Mind and the one that came out the normal way Good Mind. Atahensic died after she had given birth causing the world to start to become dark again. Good Mind took her head however and put it in the sky in order to create the sun. Bad Mind made it so that there was darkness that could hide the sun. Good Mind took the rest of Atahensic's body and used it to create the moon and stars so that there will always be some light (Jackson 321-322).

Good Mind continued creating all of the different things in the world including people. Bad Mind followed after Good Mind making a mess of everything that he had created and creating monsters to continue his work. Bad Mind even tried to make people, but he was not successful at it. This made Bad Mind angry of course and he challenged his brother to a duel to determine who would rule the earth. Bad Mind tried to trick Good Mind into revealing his weakness, however Good Mind saw through it and lied telling him that his weakness was a lotus arrow. Meanwhile Good Mind remembered that Bad Mind had always been scared of the horns of a stag. They fought for two whole days before Bad Mind decided to try to kill his brother with a lotus arrow. When Bad Mind did this Good Mind stabbed him with a stag's horn giving him a terrible injury (Jackson 322-323).

With Good Mind now being in charge of the earth he exiled Bad Mind to the depths of the earth. Good Mind also sent as many of the monsters that Bad Mind had created as he could to the depths of the earth as well. Some of the monsters managed to stay behind and continue Bad Mind's evil work. Good Mind spent many years on the earth teaching people different and various skills and protecting them from the monsters until he went to be with his family in the sky (Jackson 323).

Analysis

Kevin J. White wrote an article called "Rousing a Curiosity in Hewitt's Iroquois Cosmologies" that talks about different versions of the Iroquois creation myth. The different versions come from different peoples of the Iroquois. The three versions that he uses are from the Onondaga, the Seneca, and the Mohawk and were all obtained in the late 1800's. He wrote this article in order to show that the stories have more to them than the nine plot points they were reduced to by William N. Fenton (Kevin 87-89).

The stories all contain the woman falling from the sky onto a turtles back at the beginning of the story. Starting the story with the woman falling happens, but there are some versions with events that happens before this. A couple of these events are a person's death and either the uprooting of the Celestial Tree or the woman who is going to fall from the sky marriage to the Celestial Tree's guardian. Next in the story the woman gives birth to a daughter who then ends up marrying either the turtle they are on or the West Wind. This then leads to the daughter giving birth to twins with one being good and the other being bad. Since the bad one came out through the armpit the daughter of the woman from the sky died. Eventually the twins fight each other for

control and the good one wins. He then leaves for the sky, but not without leaving instructions behind for the humans to take care of the world (Kevin 89-90).

In order to how much variation there are between the different versions of the story he focused on what happen before the woman fell from the sky. He does this because this part of the story is usually reduced to her laying down and then falling through the clouds or her having the Celestial Tree uprooted so she can see what is beneath it and her being thrown down in the hole for doing so. In each of the three versions the tree is uprooted and the people of the sky all come up and through the hole. The woman who falls husband asks her to move closer to the hole in each of these versions and then throws her into the hole; however, there are minor differences in each version. The reason why the husband throws his wife out of the world has to do with him being in an unhealthy mind set at the time. In the Onondaga version the husband gives his wife food and some pieces of wood before they go and look at the hole. In the Seneca version the woman has already given birth to her daughter before falling through the hole in the sky. In the Mohawk version everyone living in the sky knows that the woman's husband is sick and he is lying down beside the hole with his wife for a long period of time before he pushes her into it (Kevin 102-106).

Conclusion

In the story Cain and Abel told by the Hebrews Cain stands for farming while Abel stands for herding. This story can easily be seen as the two types of economy competing with each other. Both groups would want fertile land. In the story the farmer kills the herder, but the farmer is then doomed to wander the land. This is the opposite

of what farmers normally do, but is what a herder would do. This, along with the fact that the Lord preferred the meat to the vegetables, suggest that whoever told the story was in favor of herding. Herding also would have been the easier option considering the mountainous location that Israel is. Cain being forced to wander is also something that a murderer would end up having to do in order to escape punishment.

In the story of Osiris and Seth told by the Egyptians Osiris stands for the fertile land along the Nile, while Seth stands for the desert. This shows that the desert is seen as something that is always trying to encroach upon the land around the Nile, which follows because the Nile would represent life while the desert stood for death. An important thing to notice is that at the end Seth is given a good position by Re even though he was not a nice person. This is because in the desert natural mummification could occur. This was seen by the Egyptians as the desert preserving the body for the afterlife. Which is seen in the myth because Seth kills Osiris, but Osiris ends up ruler of the underworld.

In the story of Atreus and Thyestes told by the Greeks the brothers do not stand for anything. They may be actual representations of brothers who co-ruled for a time or an example of how trying to share the power between two people does not work. The most important part about this story however is the fact that it carries down throughout the generations. The Greeks for firm believers in the idea that the sins of the father are the sins of the son. This is most clearly seen when Atreus does the same thing that his grandfather Tantalus does by cutting up people and serving them at a meal.

In the story of Romulus and Remus told by the Romans the brothers do not stand for anything. This story is merely seen as the foundation story of the city of Rome.

However an important lesson can be seen in the part of the story where Romulus kills his brother. The reason that Remus ended up dead is because he disagreed with Romulus about which hill they should build their city on. These disagreement caused him to be irritated with his brother and so he annoyed his brother by jumping over the wall Romulus had built for which Romulus killed Remus. This shows how a little disagreement can build itself into a bigger and more violent argument and how people with similar goals can disagree on methods.

In the creation story of the Iroquois the brothers stands for good and evil in general (it should be obvious which one stands for which). Good Mind creates the world and all the beautiful things in it and makes it so that people can live in it. Bad Mind tries to take everything his brother makes apart and creates evil being to help him. This story is used to explain both how the world came to be and why there is turmoil and strife in it.

All of these stories show people who have the same origins, but at the end they all end up turning on each other. Some are against each other from birth, while others end up taking a smaller disagreement farther than it should have gone. All of these siblings, while having their own stories to tell us, show us how competitive we can be as humans. This theme of competition is one that has always been a part of the human race. It what drives us to do better, but it also something that can cause us to commit horrendous acts. These stories all show times when a person competitiveness went too far.

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